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THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM

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THE LIFE.

What to you is the meaning of Life, oh! seeker after immortality? What does it mean to you to live forever, and measure existence by Eternities, not years? Truly, you lift your head among the stars, and call yourself "sky-walker," for you sit in the assemblies of the gods, and hold creation in the hollow of your hand. Yet, though I would ask you of those lofty journeys, and of the converse that you held, and of the music of the spheres, and of what the Planetary Spirits taught you, you cannot tell me, for the "I" within you, meshed in the world of shadows, driven like a leaf before the storm in the dust of physical existence (ashes of the burnt-out fires of the past) wits not of these great events. All memory of Life has been forgotten in the strain and stress of living, and all belonging to you of the Real and True, is but the echo of your dreams.

When, therefore, waking life becomes to you a dream,* and dreams take on the vividness of conscious thought, know that your soul is budding in the garden of Eternal Life, that the Spirit in its golden Triangle, with outstretched wings, broods close above, and that the mystic moment dawns, when basking in the great effulgence of that golden Glory, the bud will open to the perfect flower, and immortality be won. Then the "sky-walker" does not walk but fly, bestriding Kala Hamsa, the Great Bird. Thus life is given up, and Life is gained.

CAVÉ.

* See *Voice of the Silence*, p. 2, *et seq.*

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1899/1900

INDIAN DAYS.

A Dialogue of Life and Death.

*By H. P. Blavatsky.**

The heat was unbearable the day we spent in D———. It was so hot that one was inclined to suspect that Surya meant to bake the Jats, who are his faithful worshippers, alive, as well as ourselves, who so constantly cursed his too scorching caresses. The glaring rays of sun poured liquid gold on the marble walls and cupolas of the Kiosks, lay in blinding spots on the slumbering waters of the tanks, and darted dazzling arrows into everything, living or dead. Even the flocks of parrots and peacocks, which are as plentiful in the gardens of India as sparrows in our Russian cabbage beds, were forced to hide in the thickest part of the shrubbery.

Great was the silence around us. Everything slept, tingling with heat and languor. We took refuge in a marble summer house, lofty and well hidden under the thick trees, so that we enjoyed under this peaceful shelter a sort of comparative coolness. It stood in the middle of a small pond, protected and darkened by various creepers. While there, it was impossible to feel either weary or over heated. Here was a haven of shadow and coolness, but outside the limit of the miniature lake, a regular Hades of heat lay ablaze. The very ground seemed to crackle and open in numberless chinks, under the flaming kisses of the formidable spring sun. His rays, like fiery tongues, licked the foliage of the garden, still luxurious but already fading.

Roses pressed their petals together or shed them on the ground. Even the lotus and the water lily curled the edges of their thick, hardy leaves, as if gingerly avoiding the burning touch.

Orchids alone, "those blossoms of passion," lifted high their many-colored, insect-like chalices, drinking in this torrent of fire as other flowers drink in refreshing dew.

What an original and lovely garden! It was set on a dead rock measuring hardly an acre, but containing over two hundred large and small fountains. The keeper, a clean-shaven old man, all sugar in words and manner, assured us that only a part of the fountains were playing, many being out of order and stopped; but that on the day of a great reception in D———, that of the Prince of Wales, if I am not mistaken, there were six hundred of them.

* Translated from the Russian by Vera Jelikhovska Johnston.

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However, we were perfectly satisfied with the two hundred. For a few rupees the gardeners enabled us to feel deliciously cool during the hottest hours of the day, and, when the night came, to walk along a path which was bordered with high sprays of fresh water instead of trees. I have never seen anything comparable to these two walls of water-dust, sparkling in the moonlight and passing through all the shades of the rainbow.

Almost abandoned by human beings, the lovely garden is running wild, given over as it is to the sole use of an army of magnificent peacocks, which are also getting as wild as the garden. The favorite birds of Juno, whom India calls Sarasvati, fill the garden, hundreds of them composedly pacing up and down the path, sweeping with their long tails the accumulation of dry leaves and rubbish which evidently had not been removed from the path for years. The birds are strung along the branches of the trees like so many beads, giving to the old garden the appearance of an enchanted wood in some fairy-land. In the glare of an Indian day, the shaggy old trees move as if expanding and contracting in gentle breathing, and thousands of inquisitive eyes peep at you from behind the thick foliage, sparkling like huge blue sapphires, with reflections of gold. These are the eyes on the tails of the restless peacocks, ever moving on the branches.

The first time I entered the garden, I stood aghast a long while utterly unable to account for this strange phantasmagoria. But as soon as my curiosity took the shape of action and I moved forward to examine the wonder more closely, I had to suffer the consequences of my rashness. One of the peacocks frightened by my approach, darted past me, and in his heavy flight, not only knocked the sun hat off my head, but myself as well off my feet. So my reflections on the theme of the wonders of India were interrupted. The exploration of the garden, however, soothed my feelings and the Babu avenged my fall by tearing a whole handful of bright feathers from the tail of another peacock. "A souvenir from D———," he said. He did not seem to be in the least moved by the consideration that his victim was perfectly innocent, having taken no part in the offense.

The garden is cut in all directions by a regular network of narrow paths. These were going to be cleaned, the gardener explained to us, but not before he heard about some new "distinguished visitor" having started for D———; which led us to conclude, with our usual insight, that we were not included in the category of those

lucky people. In all directions we saw waters peacefully slumbering in their nests of marble, snugly covered with thick blankets of green scum. The receptacles of the fountains, the ponds and miniature lakes had long turned into a sort of green gruel. Only the waterworks right in front of the palace are regularly attended to, and add immensely to the beauty of the lovely wood. In spite of its neglected appearance, the octagonal pond in the center, where we were taking refuge, is especially beautiful. Surrounded by smaller fountains with their high sprays flying into the air from the bowers of luxuriant tropical growth, we spent a blissful day, as if in some aquatic kingdom. Four avenues of waterworks lead crosswise to the pond and you reach the Kiosk which sheltered us, by going over four little bridges with lace-like parapets of white marble.

We were tired of talking, and sat in silence; each of us was left to his own reflections and occupations. I was trying to read, but my thoughts turned more to the Thakur than to the contents of the book. With his head half hidden by the thick foliage of some creeper, and only his long white beard protruding, our respected chief, Colonel O., was snoring gently. Narayan and Mulji crouched on the floor and the Babu taking the place of some absent idol, sat with his legs crossed, on the high pedestal and to all appearances was also snoozing.

We sat on, half dozing, motionless and silent for a long while. At last towards half past five, the slumbering gardens began to wake up. The heat grew less; the peacocks crawled out of their hiding places and flocks of golden-green parrots called out to each other on the tops of the trees. A few moments more and the sun will disappear under the distant line of the salt lakes. Then exhausted nature will be granted a respite until next morning, and will grow cool for the new ordeal by fire.

I put my book by, and looked around with increased interest, everything beginning to breathe freely and to move. The garden, the very image of Daniel's fiery furnace a moment ago, was now turning into a grove in some classical idyl. But in vain would one look for troops of merry nymphs playfully throwing water at each other; in vain would one listen for the gay notes of Pan's piping. The limpid waters of the tank reflected only the deep blue sky, and the peacocks roosting on the lace-like bridges. Preparing for sleep, they played with their tails like so many Spanish ladies with their fans; they spread them and then shut them again, admiringly looking at their own images reflected in the water below. At last,

having sent us a few more golden rays, the sun departed and a faint cooling breeze began to reach us. It was so pleasant in our summer house, so cool and quiet, that we decidedly refused to go into the stuffy halls of the palace for dinner, and asked for our food to be served to us where we were, deputing the Babu to settle the matter.

The frisky Bengali would not go over the bridge. He said he recognized the peacock he had plundered, sitting right on the balustrade, and feared the bird's revenge. So it would fare better with him if he took a safer and a shorter way to the shore, which he did by plunging head foremost into the water directly from the pedestal on which he was enthroned throughout the afternoon. The noise of the splashing water startled the Colonel, who said he wanted to know whether the Babu meant to get drowned, plunging into unknown waters in this foolhardy way.

"Better to get drowned, than to risk the revenge of an infuriated *glamour!*" shouted the latter, noisily blowing the water from his mouth and nostrils.

"What glamour?" asked our president, pacified by the fact that the water hardly reached the Babu's chest.

"Why, the accursed peacock, of course. I have recognized him for a certainty for the same bird who visited us yesterday in Burtpore," went on the Bengali at the top of his voice, stepping with great difficulty on the muddy bed of the tank. "Do you think that I did not notice the pretended bird and Mulji exchanging meaning glances behind my back!"

"A very round-about way of making fun of me," said the "General" frowning. "This *Nastika* never believed in anything, laughing at everything on earth."

"Well, now is your opportunity to laugh at him. Just look at him!" I said, bursting into laughter.

Indeed the Babu was a sight! With an effort he extricated himself from the mud and climbing the high white marble banks, left behind him long streaks of greenish mud. Covered with mud and weeds all over, he had lost his likeness to humanity.

"You are like a drowned man, my poor Babu," I said laughingly. "It is the second bath you have taken today. The water has a wonderful attraction for you. Surely after death you will be turned into a water spirit; but I hope you will escape death by drowning."

"What I was, that I am and that I shall be," he answered, quoting one of the aphorisms of his all-denying sect. "Dust I was, dust

I shall be, and besides they say that drowning is a very pleasant death, Mem-Sahib."

"Who you *are,* everybody sees; what you *shall be,* I do not know, but undoubtedly in your last incarnation you were a Newfoundland puppy!" retorted Mulji.

But the remark was lost on the Babu. He evidently was a little ashamed of his looks and ran towards the house at full speed.

Were Narayan right and were I actually endowed with the gift of prophesy, as he pretended, I would rather have swallowed my own tongue than have given utterance to my last remark. Poor boy, little did he think that an untimely and painful death was in store for him in the yellow waters of the Ganges. It is five years since I saw him last, and two since his terrible accident, but I can never think about him and the pleasant days we spent together without feeling sad, sad at heart. I often dream,—only too often,—of his fragile, child-like little body emerging from the water all covered with the green-black mud of that tank at D———. It seems to me I can see his eyes fixed on mine inquiringly, those eyes of his so full of light and mischief then, glazed and dim a long time now. It seems to me I can hear my own remark; "I hope you will escape death by drowning," and his light-hearted laughing answer, "what I was, that I shall be; dust I was, dust I shall be," and I wake up shuddering with horror and pity.

The poor fellow was drowned in the most horrible, and at the same time ridiculous manner. Between Dehra Dan and Haridwar the Ganges is not the great river it becomes further on, but a mad torrent which is as swift as it is shallow. In one place especially, the river is to be crossed only with the aid of a small footbridge, while horses must be led, their legs only partly covered by the water. But in spite of all warning, the Babu would cross over on horseback. The horse was soon knocked off its legs, and the boy could not free himself for some reason or other, most probably his foot having got entangled in the stirrup. The mad torrent dragged both horse and rider over a mile, until they finally disappeared, having reached a place where the river forms an abrupt waterfall.

"But is it really possible? Has he actually become dust?" I often ask myself when my thoughts turn to the past, and invariably my mind turns to another conversation, a conversation which took place only a few days after our pleasant stay in D———, and which may throw some light on the insoluble enigma of death. As usual,

Narayan and the Babu came to disagree on some important point and asked Thakur to help them out of their difficulties.

I have written down this remarkable conversation in full as I remember it, in the hopes that serious readers may profit by it. Not that it definitely settled questions which to me personally are a constant torment; but it gives a complete idea of the point of view from which the best philosophy of the East considers life beyond the grave, its mysteries, and, in general, the soul of man.

(To be continued.)

ORIENTAL DEPARTMENT.

Edited by Charles Johnston.

THE WATER OF LIFE.

"Narada came to Sanatkumara, saying: Master, teach me to know the Soul; for I have heard from the sages that he who knows the Soul crosses over the sea of sorrow. But I, Master, am sorrowful; therefore guide me over to sorrow's further shore.

"He answered him: All thou knowest already, is but words. But thou shouldst seek to find out truth. For when a man knows, he declares the truth; but without knowing, he cannot declare the truth; therefore thou shouldst seek after understanding.

"When he gains insight, he understands; without insight, he cannot understand, but through insight, he understands; therefore thou shouldst seek to gain insight.

"When a man aspires, then he gains insight; without aspiration there is no insight, but insight comes through aspiration. Therefore thou shouldst seek for aspiration.

"What a man grows forth from, towards that he aspires; if he grows not forth from it, he cannot aspire after it, but he aspires because he grows forth from it. Therefore thou shouldst seek thy source, from which thou growest forth.

"When a man acts, then he grows; if he does not act, he cannot grow, but he grows through action. Therefore thou shouldst follow after action.

"When he finds joy, then he acts; if he finds not joy, he will not act, but he acts when he finds joy. Therefore seek to find out joy.

"Where the Boundless is, there is joy; there is no joy in what is limited, but the Infinite is joy. Therefore seek to know the Limitless.

"When he neither sees nor hears nor perceives anything but the Soul, that is the Limitless; but where he sees, hears, and perceives what is other than the Soul, there is limitation. The Boundless is immortal, but the limited is subject to death; the Boundless is rooted in its own greatness, but not in what men call greatness. For men call these things greatness: cattle and horses, elephants and gold, slaves and women, lands and houses. But not this greatness do I speak of.

"It is beneath, it is above; it is to the west, it is to the east; it is to the south, it is to the north; it is the all. But I myself am this: I am beneath, I am above; I am to the west, I am to the east; I am to the south, I am to the north; I am the All. But I am the Soul: the Soul is beneath, the Soul is above; the Soul is to the west, the Soul is to the east; the Soul is to the south, the Soul is to the north; the Soul is the All.

"He who beholds this thus, understanding it thus, and knowing it thus, the Soul is his delight, the Soul is his pleasure, the Soul is his friend, the Soul is his joy; he is king over himself, and works his will through all the worlds. They who know not this, are subject to others; their world passes away, nor do they work their desire throughout the worlds.

"The Seer beholds not death nor sickness nor sorrow; the Seer beholds the All, and in all things finds the All.

"He who takes only pure food from the world, becomes pure in being; then he remembers truly, and from that true memory comes the loosening of all the knots of the heart.

"Thus when his error was worn away, the Master Sanatkumara showed him the shore that is beyond the darkness. Therefore they tell that he has crossed to the further shore."—*Chhandogya Upanishad.*

We all come forth from the Soul, which is boundless Joy. The memory of that joy remains with us and haunts us, and the longing for it fills us with sorrow. All the works and ways of man, all his follies and his sins, are but his passionate strivings to find his way back there, to the Soul from whence he came.

The Soul that man is, is the fulness of abounding life, glowing with power, self-sustained, self-replenished, radiant and exultant. Fallen from grace, and driven into exile in his narrow shell of personal life, he seeks to give himself that sense of abounding life by outward sensations, for the veriest sensualist seeks nothing but keenness of life, strong feeling, a vivid sense of the activity of his

being. In reality, there is no impurity in this, for the sense of vividest life is his birthright, and he is only seeking what is his own. There is no impurity, but there is futility, and a certain shadow of pain.

For any outward sensation whatever, be it good or bad, be it painful or pleasant, if it be kept up unbroken and unintermitted, will certainly bring numbness, and a total inability to perceive it any longer. There is no possibility of continued keenness for a single sensation.

The whole sensual world lies under this law; and therefore throughout the whole sensual world there is alternation: pain bursting in upon pleasure; death hurrying on the heels of life. Were there no cold, we could not feel heat; if there were no evil, we could not speak of good; and only the presence of the devils gives their holiness to the gods.

This two-sidedness runs through the whole natural world as we know it in sensation; and the natural world mirrored in sensation is the psychic world. Nothing psychic transcends the personal self with its isolation; nor is there any help or liberation for it throughout the whole psychic realm. All things psychic come under the law of alternation; all things psychic are subject to death.

Sensation is nothing but this: an attempt to feign the vividness of real life by an unreal expedient; by keenness of outward stimulus, instead of fulness of inward power. But even pleasure becomes numbness and insensibility; even unbroken life becomes miserable weariness, so that the personal self, in its desperation has created for itself pain, to cure the numbness of pleasure; has discovered death, to break the weariness of miserably prolonged life. Numbness and insensibility terrify the personal self far more than even pain and death; therefore it has sought out these grim expedients, to slake its thirst for the keen sense of being; a thirst that is a tragical memory of its old days in the shadow of the Soul.

All this is wrong and needless. In the true destiny of man, there is no place for pain or sorrow, no room for sickness and death. These things belong only to the hither shore; on the further shore, where we should inhabit, they cannot dwell. What we need, to cure us of sorrow, is the inflowing of the Soul.

We need to find our way back to the living waters; deep draughts of that boundless flood will give us the sense of abounding and exultant life within ourselves; the very prize we seek so vainly to gain by the way of sensation. And through desperate struggles,

and almost despairing aspiration, we are finding our way back; for we can only aspire thither, from whence we have come.

The first draught of the waters of life, every man may have for nothing; the second and all following draughts must be paid for, and paid for in full. The first draught of the immortal life will teach us that there is another source of vividness of being, besides sensation; a source the very opposite of sensation, set against it as the night is set against the day; and of which the way of sensation is but the poor distorted copy, seeking to give what it can never give; what is the gift only of the Soul. If we would drink a second time of the waters of life; if we would drink this time consciously and knowingly, we must pay for the draught by conquering the lust of sensation, for the two cannot go together. The body may be true to sensation, live its life, and die its death; or it may be true to the life of the Soul, and be gradually transformed to a vesture of the immortals. But it cannot be true to both; one or the other must be effaced; and there is nothing more awful than the desolation of falling back into death and the darkness, after once we have tasted of life and beheld the light. But to struggle and gain freedom from the lust of sensation, whose thrall we have been for so many ages, is a task that might try a hero's soul; yet the prize is worth it, for the prize is immortality.

The real fulness of immortal life, as against the imitation; gold as against dross: this is the first boon of the Soul. The next is one which we may well regard as a perpetual miracle: the one great miracle of life. It is the finding of our other selves. The water of life is a sea above us and beyond us; and therefore our first free draught has taken us out of ourselves, thus admonishing us that this 'ourself' is only a small part of the matter; a very insignificant inlet of the infinite sea. And here comes the price to be paid for the second draught. We can no more hold to the little inlet of our personalities; we must open our hearts to the infinite sea. To find the immortal waters a second time, we must lose ourselves. That is the price, and it must be paid. To sink back into the lonely personal self, after seeing its smallness, is to be guilty of a baseness that brings long, slow death; but to rise altogether above our selves, and let nothing remain in us to check the Soul, requires a fortitude that is divine. No human soul accomplishes this without bitter weeping and wailing, without almost heartbreaking and despair; as no soul frees itself from lust without passing through a black gloom of despondency, deadness, and the shadow of death.

But in losing ourselves, we find our other selves. We were under the impression, in old days, that we really saw and knew and understood the people round us; but we now recognize how vastly we were mistaken. Simple as may be the heart of man, it needs a god to understand it; and we must attain to godlike power and insight, by driving our selfhood aside, before we can even feel the presence of the simplest heart. But when the first great victory is won, when the divine quietness and strength descend on us like the soft wings of the nestling twilight, then the radiance begins to gleam and glow to us through the darkness from other hearts, as the stars come out through the mantling shadows of evening. And no sight on earth or in heaven can vie with the marvel and miracle of this, our first initiation into real human life.

Thus we gradually make our way back into the inheritance of the immortals. The rising tide of the water of life, at first a faint spring, often stifled and hidden and defiled, gradually washes us and makes us clean, restoring us to immortal strength, to the freshness of everlasting youth. All we do will have the new and unprecedented quality of a creative act; we shall perpetually embody in our works some new secret of the Soul; and there are still hidden secrets as fine as the decking of the forests in springtime, or the lighting of the stars.

But nothing in this world or any other will equal the recognition of the divine and creative quality in other souls; there is where we shall find our true inheritance; and we shall find it in increasing measure, with the rising onflow of the Soul. If man is not yet redeemed it is more the fault of the redeemers than of man.

THEOSOPHICAL NEWS AND WORK.

THE CONVENTION.

The Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society in America, was held in the Audience room of the Grand Hotel, at Cincinnati, April 30th, 1899, and was called to order by Dr. J. D. Buck, President; about 75 members being present. Dr. A. P. Buchman, of Fort Wayne, was elected Temporary Chairman. Dr. Buchman took the chair, and after a few remarks proceeded to organize the Convention.

Dr. Thomas M. Stewart was elected Secretary.

Committees were appointed on Credentials, Resolutions, and Nominations.

Major James Albert Clark, of Washington, was then elected permanent Chairman of the Convention, Dr. Stewart being confirmed as permanent Secretary.

Telegrams of greeting from England and San Francisco were received, and after being read at the Convention, were ordered to be placed on the minutes.

Major Clark then took the chair and addressed the Convention briefly, expressing his appreciation of the honor conferred upon him.

The Committee on Credentials reported that 24 Branches were represented by delegates or proxies present.

Report of the Treasurer was then called for, and was found to be as follows:

Receipts	$1,587.73
Disbursements	995.54
Balance	$ 592.19

This report was received by the Convention with much approval, and many expressions of satisfaction, and Dr. Buck, in commenting thereupon, reminded the members of the advantage secured by the establishment of a sound financial basis, explaining that expenses had been kept down and the personal labors of all the officials and assistants had been contributed, in the hope that a surplus could be shown at this period, indicative of honest and conservative management of the Society's funds. He further advised the members and Branches of the desirability of continuing their payment of dues and donations as liberally as could be afforded, to the end that during the ensuing year there might be a sufficient accumulation to justify a re-establishment of our Magazine.

Committee on Resolutions then reported that no new matter had been presented for their consideration, and upon the recommendation of the Committee the Convention unanimously reaffirmed the "Proclamation" of 1895 as expressing the present attitude of our Society.

Invitations to hold the next regular Convention at Columbus, Indianapolis, Washington, Kansas City, were received from Delegates from said cities, all of which were ordered to be referred to the Executive Committee.

On motion the Convention adjourned, to meet at 2.30 P. M.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

The Convention resumed its sitting at 2.45 P. M., the first order of business being the reading of the President's Annual Address, as follows:

Comrades and Delegates to the Convention:—

We are here assembled as the Thirteenth Annual Convention of Theosophists in America, having dropped the title of the American Section of the T. S. since the Boston Convention of 1896, while retaining the title of T. S. in A. and the Constitution of 1896. That two other organizations assume the same title is not a matter of surprise, and need not be a matter of controversy. All these organizations profess the same principles, avow the same objects, and the members of each profess loyalty to the same genius who started the Theosophical Movement in 1875. All of which proves that theosophists, like other people, differ in opinion and even in their application of ethical principles to conduct and to life.

The T. S. in A. which we represent, by refusing to relinquish its organization and surrender our rights therein at the Chicago Convention of February, 1898, has continued the legitimate work of the Society under the Constitution as it had previously been conducted by Mr. Judge, as the accredited agent of H. P. Blavatsky, up to the time of her death.

The reorganization here in Cincinnati, in May, 1898, was simply a re-affirmation of the previously existing order and association. We now return to the former time of meeting, *viz.*, the last Sunday in April, and so continue the old order, traditions and work of the Society.

Having been present at every Convention since the corporate organization of the T. S. in A., having witnessed the growth, the dissentions, and even the disruptions that have occurred, it is with peculiar pleasure that I welcome you to Cincinnati for this our Thirteenth Annual Meeting. Here in the Theosophical ranks you will find peace; peace secured through the discussion of principles and the avoidance of personalities; peace consistent with the absolute liberty of the individual. With one of the largest organizations ever attained in America, with each member free to express his opinions and to act upon his own convictions, we have been in perfect harmony and acted in concord on all matters that have arisen in the conduct of the Society. It is in this spirit of Freedom and Brotherhood that we welcome you into our midst, and invite you to co-operate with us as a local society in extending these principles throughout the land. It is these principles that have given us solidarity and perpetuity, and kept out all disintegrating forces or influences. We have persistently held by the declared objects of the Society, and have found enough in the *Secret Doctrine* and our

splendid literature to interest the public and to inspire us as individuals during the rest of the present incarnation. In asking you as individuals to share with us, we crave the privilege of co-operating with you as delegates representing a large constituency, in order that the blessings of Peace and Brotherhood may become universal amongst men.

The year since our last convention here has not been especially eventful. The members of the T. S. in A. are, in a certain sense, separatists. We have refused to be diverted from our legitimate work by personal controversies or considerations of any sort, and as students of the Sacred Science, have learned to stand alone, and to endeavor to work out these problems in daily life. In other words, to apply Brotherhood no less than to proclaim it. We have no controversies with, nor animosities toward other organizations, nor do we deny to them the possession of the same qualities. We make work along these lines a special duty, and remember that the "duty of another is full of danger", and attended with difficulty. The past year has not been fruitful of growth in organization, but rather of disorganization. No effort has been made or solicitation used to induce old members to join us, even where they had broken all other affiliations, though they have been cordially welcomed to their rightful place when they returned. If there has been a seeming lack of enthusiasm, it has been more than made good by deep conviction and steadfastness to principles. We are thus building for the future, while resisting the disintegrating influences of today. When the cycle again changes, as change it will, and regeneration again sets in, let us see to it that we have created such conditions, and cherished such a spirit of consideration for others, that we may stand as a nucleus of a genuine Brotherhood of Man.

At the Convention a year ago, 34 Branches were reported in affiliation. We had no accurate list of members. As all records and lists of members were retained by the usurping power in N. Y., we had slowly to regather the lists of members and to build again our statistical data. Some organizations have disbanded for lack of members, or from discouragement at the continued dissentions in their midst. Several old charters have been replaced, in some cases renewed by a minority of members, and 9 new ones have been issued. During the year 69 new members have been admitted in the usual form, while former members have all along been returning. Our strength lies not in numbers, though we have a goodly organization, but in the individual character of our members. We

have had no public lectures outside of local Branches, and no general propaganda work during the year. Nor do I believe the time is ripe for such work. The luke-warm and indifferent may drop out. Unable to stand alone, they would be little use in the maintenance of the Society, and the Society is better without them. Those who are genuinely interested need help, and will not have far to seek in order to find it.

Several attempts are now being made by former members to form new organizations, the reasons assigned being as diverse as individual opinions on such matters usually are. We can only wish them, one and all, success, so far as they seek to promote the cause of Brotherhood amongst men. We who are here assembled find the old organization good enough, and see no reason for radically changing it. We are apt to charge others with the disorganization going on in the general movement. We have expected too much of individuals. There has been from the first, since 1875, a tendency in the minds of many to place some individual on a pedestal and to accord to such, if not divine powers, at least unusual prerogatives. We had to learn the lesson, that human evolution is always an individual problem, a growth from within, in the accomplishment of which we may indeed derive assistance from study and from association with others, but after all, we have to *become* the ideal that we seek. If in seeking this assistance, we forget or neglect our duties to others, if we preach and proclaim Brotherhood to the four quarters of the globe, and remain uncharitable and inconsiderate toward others, we shall not only fail in individual progress, no matter what our opportunities and who our teachers may be, but our unbrotherliness in fact will bring about precisely the disintegration which we are now witnessing. Toleration of the opinions of others which may differ from our own, is, at best, a negative virtue. Have we not failed even here?

The Brotherhood proclaimed by the founders of the Society, is no negative virtue, but a charity so broad as to include every man of woman born, and a sympathy so great that it forgets to condemn, and labors only to help and to save. While the cry of Brotherhood was in the air, it was the unbrotherliness in deed and in fact that separated us from the Chicago Convention. This lesson cannot be too often recalled or too seriously taken to heart. Not in the condemnation of individuals, but in guarding our own speech, and in building our own lives in conformity with what we profess. It may be but a single step from the slogan of brotherhood to the

slang of contempt and cynicism. There are thousands of organizations today that profess and proclaim the Brotherhood of man, and the survival of the fittest will not be determined by the question as to who shouts it the loudest or keeps the word continually in the air. A little self-restraint, a gentle consideration for others, a helpful hand or a kindly word wherever and whenever needed, is the only sermon on brotherhood that counts a feather-weight in the problem of human evolution, or in lifting the heavy Karma of the world.

The great social problems of the day are before us for solution. They are to be solved by work, not wind. They may be solved by ballots, or they will solve themselves by bullets, and the professed Theosophist can not hold himself aloof from economics. Meditation and renunciation may help the individual to the abode of peace within his own soul, but these should serve to clear his brain, warm his heart and strengthen his arm for the conflict against wrong and oppression. The real Theosophist is a Soldier of Truth, and a Warrior of Light. He may war against institutions that are public wrongs, and vested power and privilege that oppress the poor, and in thus doing battle for human rights remember his duty to every man, as a brother by every tie either human or divine. It is not weak-kneed dreamers that the world needs today, but strong men and women, with good common-sense, fearless declaration of principle and uncompromising integrity, who stand first, last and all the time, for the highest principles, and the broadest charity. If Theosophy is powerless to help along these lines, it may as well be swept into the dust-bins of the past.

As students of the Secret Doctrine, we have the grandest philosophy known to man. It enables us to solve the perplexing problems of life, and gives us the light of knowledge in place of conjecture, blind belief, or still more blind doubt and denial. But it does not and cannot remove us from individual responsibility. It intensifies the sense of duty, and when really understood, gives meaning to life and zest to all human endeavor. It places before the soul of man an ideal of human perfection, and the conditions of universal happiness and prosperity. If its teachings are understood and genuinely accepted, it kills out selfishness, and teaches co-operation, and puts the man at his best estate for the service of humanity by which, alone, he rises to full stature as a son and servant of the people, and an almoner of the Divine. Thus only in doing his duty to all can he evolve to perfection as an individual. The law of Growth is the law of Use. In this warfare of truth, names and

numbers count for little. One man may face the world, as did one woman in 1875, and yet prove a majority in the councils of the future. It is not the subtleties of metaphysics or the intricacies of ancient philosophy or religion that have given the T. S. a hearing in these last years of the 19th century. It has gained a hearing in spite of these, and through these ancient cults taught the broad lesson of charity. It has again and again been charged with adopting these, simply because it claimed for them a candid hearing and just consideration. This is like identifying the good Samaritan with the outcast, whom he tries to shield and rescue. It is the price paid for the privilege of serving the poor and despised. Just as the Man of Sorrows was condemned for eating with publicans and sinners.

It seems to me that our duty as Theosophists is plain, and our opportunity never better than today. Upon the individual discharge of this duty depends the success and perpetuity of the T. S. in A., and not upon our adulation or loyalty to Leaders and Official Heads, or even on our belief in Mahatmas. Let the Branches of our Society be schools for the education of men and women, who shall in deed and in truth help the world, and in our annual conventions let us discuss and advocate those principles, measures and methods that shall most certainly and largely contribute to this end.

Members of the T. S. in A. cannot have failed to observe that what I have outlined as the true mission and method of the T. S. is precisely that adopted in the *Forum,* since its revival a year ago. In it, principles not personalities, have been discussed, and the principle of charity and toleration exercised. Not one offensive personal reference can be found in the *Forum.* All of this is equally true of the *English Theosophist,* and the foreign magazines published by our affiliated Societies. The thanks of the Convention are especially due to our comrades in N. Y., who have had the *Forum* in charge, and who, month by month, have so faithfully and acceptably discharged this labor of love. Something still further should be said in regard to the "Oriental Department" of our little journal. Mr. Johnston's work, performed month after month, is not only a labor of love, but a literary work of unusual merit. It could not be replaced, and something more than thanks should express the appreciation of the T. S. in A.

It is by the cheerful co-operation of the loyal workers that have remained, that we are still in the possession of an organization, and that the T. S. in A. has not yielded to the disorganizing forces and the hostile attacks continually directed against it. In all this, I find reason for congratulation, courage and hope.

This address was fully discussed unanimously approved and ordered to be received and placed upon the minutes.

The report of the Committee on Nominations was then called for. Dr. Tenney, Chairman of the Committee, responded, saying the Committee had thought it unwise to offer any changes in the present official and executive board if the previous incumbents were willing to continue their duties for a further period.

The following officers were then put in nomination for re-election for the term of the ensuing year:

For President, J. D. Buck.

For Vice President and Treasurer, A. H. Spencer.

For Members of the Executive Committee, A. P. Buchman, G. E. Harter, William Main, William Ludlow, M. H. Phelps, and George M. Coffin.

There were no other nominations, and by motion duly put and seconded, the above officials were declared elected.

Dr. Buck, in accepting the Presidency for another year, declared his firm adherence to the principles of Theosophy, and to the interests especially of the T. S. in A., as their exponent, and promised to continue, as in the past, to give to the executive office his best endeavors in thought, and all the time and labor properly to be spared from the duties of his profession and the necessities of his private life.

Major Clark, the Chairman of the Convention, was then presented by the Convention, with a gavel as a memento of the occasion and received the same with thanks appropriately expressed.

After the discharge of the various committees and some further remarks by the Chairman, the meeting adjourned to meet at College Hall, at 8 P. M.

EVENING SESSION.

The Convention assembled at College Hall, at 8.30 P. M., Dr. Buck in the Chair, and about 250 persons present; this meeting being, in accordance with the usual custom, especially devoted to the public, the Chairman introduced as the speaker of the evening, Major James Albert Clark, of Washington, who had chosen as his subject, "The Meaning of the Theosophical Movement."

Major Clark spoke for upwards of an hour and a half, presenting his subject in most learned and scholarly form, tracing the Theosophic Movement through its stages in history, comparing its aspects at different periods with the thought and habits of the times.

He brought to bear upon the subject a most elaborate and interesting compendium of scientific analogies, quoting from numerous writers and experimentors of high standing and authority, to show that the religio-scientific theories and doctrines accepted for years past by students of Theosophy were rapidly coming into approval and adoption by the intellectual community.

During the entire period of Major Clark's speech the audience manifested remarkable interest, following him to the very end with unflagging attention, notwithstanding the severe heat of the evening and the rather exceptional depth of the discourse. After Major Clark's speech and a few remarks by Mr. Spencer and Dr. Buck the Convention was adjourned *sine die*.

King of a thousand worlds am I
  And my reign with Time began.
The night and the day in their cyclic sway
  Pass by as their deeds I scan;
Yet Time shall cease, ere I find release,
  For I am the Soul of Man.

CHARLES H. ORR.

REVIEWS

The English Theosophist for April reaches us in a new and well designed light green cover, a dignity to which the *Forum* hopes to attain in the not far distant future! There are some sensible editorial notes, the usual reprint from an old *Path*, and a thoughtful article by H. H. B., "The Quest of the Ideal." The new volume also starts a "Answers to Questions" department, while there are quite a list of activities. Being a new volume, it is an excellent time to subscribe.

The May number is received just as we go to press. We especially notice some sensible observations by "An Outsider," under the caption "W. Q. Judge on Occultism," and there is an extended notice of the half-yearly meeting of the North Eastern Theosophical Societies' Federation. (S.)

Lotusbltüten (German) for April reproduces a section of Sir Edwin Arnold's beautiful rendition of the "Bhavagad Gita," in verse, which it is printing in installments. There are also many pages devoted to a "Life" of Paracelsus. (S.)

Theosophicher Wegweiser (German) for March has for its leading feature, an article by Dr. Hartmann, "The Basis of the Theosophical Society." It also contains a notice of the second annual meeting of the T. S. in Leipzig. (S.)

The *Tidsskrift for Teosofi* (Swedish) for March contains the conclusion of the translation of "Some Modern Failings," and starts a question and answer department with two leading questions; one about the Masters and the other about racial Karma. (S.)

The Purposes of Soul, by Jasper Niemand, has just been reprinted by the H. P. B. Press at London. It is such an admirable little paper, and is read so much less widely than it deserves, that special mention is made of it here. It may be obtained from the W. Q. J. Pub. Co. (S.)

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA.

FOUNDED BY H. P. BLAVATSKY AT NEW YORK IN 1875.

Its objects are:

1st. The formation of a nucleus of universal brotherhood without distinctions of race, creed, sex, caste or color.

2d. The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences.

3d. The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychic powers latent in man.

The Society does not pretend to be able to establish at once a universal brotherhood among men, but only strives to create the nucleus of such a body. Many of its members believe that an acquaintance with the world's religions and philosophies will reveal, as the common and fundamental principle underlying these, that "spiritual identity of all Souls with the Oversoul" which is the basis of true brotherhood; and many of them also believe that an appreciation of the finer forces of nature and man will still further emphasize the same idea.

The organization is wholly unsectarian, with no creed, dogma or personal authority to enforce or impose; neither is it to be held responsible for the opinions of its members, who are expected to accord to the beliefs of others that tolerance which they demand for their own.

The following proclamation was adopted at the Convention of the Society held at Boston, April, 1895:

"The Theosophical Society in America by its delegates and members in Convention assembled, does hereby proclaim fraternal good will and kindly feeling towards all students of Theosophy and members of Theosophical Societies wherever and however situated. It further proclaims and avers its hearty sympathy and association with such persons and organizations in all theosophical matters except those of government and administration, and invites their correspondence and co-operation.

"To all men and women of whatever caste, creed, race or religious belief, who aim at the fostering of peace, gentleness and unselfish regard one for another, and the acquisition of such knowledge of men and nature as shall tend to the elevation and advancement of the human race, it sends most friendly greeting and freely proffers its services.

"It joins hands with all religions and religious bodies whose efforts are directed to the purification of men's thoughts and the bettering of their ways, and it avows its harmony therewith. To all scientific societies and individual searchers after wisdom upon whatever plane and by whatever righteous means pursued, it is and will be grateful for such discovery and unfoldment of Truth as shall serve to announce and confirm *a scientific basis for ethics*.

"And lastly, it invites to its membership those who, seeking a higher life hereafter, would learn to know the *Path* they tread in this."

Applications for membership should be addressed to the President, Dr. J. D. Buck, 116 W. 7th Street, Cincinnati, Ohio. Admission fee, $1.00. Annual dues, including subscription to THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM, $2.00. Theosophical literature can be obtained from the W. Q. Judge Publishing Co., P. O. Box 1584, New York, N. Y.

THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM.

The Society is not responsible for any statements therein unless contained in an official document. Questions, answers to questions, opinions and notes on Theosophical subjects are invited.

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